



**Green Shoots**  
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

## **A Sustainable Education in Central Vietnam**

**Established in 2011, Green Shoots is not your average international school. Our commitment to Sustainability, a core school value, is what differentiates us from other schools.**

With very limited cash but an immeasurable amount of love and dedication, we have built a school for 100 students from 18 months to 16 years old who are cared for by a staff of over 30 people. We have gained membership of the Council of British International Schools and accreditation by Cambridge International Exams, and have planted the seeds of a community-service programme and scholarship fund that will, as we grow, allow the school to help those in need within our community.

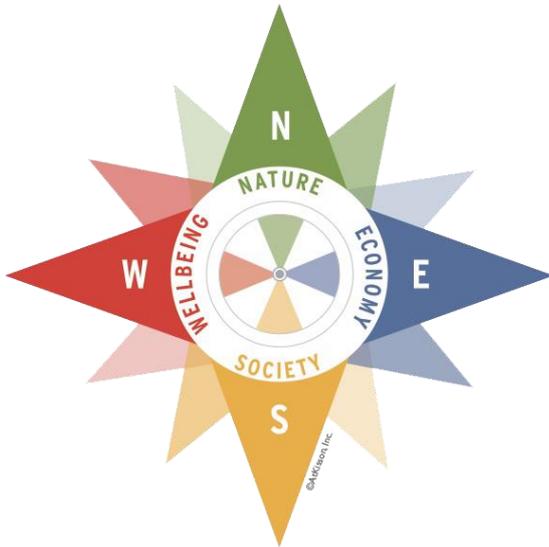
This document demonstrates our Sustainability progress to date and outlines our plans for the future.



## The Sustainability Compass

According to leading educational thinkers Compass Education, sustainability is ‘a set of systems conditions that allows humans to flourish indefinitely.’

Green Shoots focuses on the four areas of sustainability developed by Compass Education and shown in their Sustainability Compass. These are: Nature, Economy, Society and Wellbeing.



### Nature

Sustainable care for nature means taking only what is needed and can be naturally replaced in order to meet the needs and aspirations of current and future generations. Three core words summarise this focus: *reduce, reuse and recycle*.

### Economy

Economic sustainability means combining profitability for growth with a commitment to meeting community needs at an affordable price.

### Society

A sustainable society is one in which systems and frameworks ensure that people are secure, well cared for and respected. A sustainable society supports all members to reach their full potential.

### Wellbeing

Sustainability in this quadrant of the compass focuses on providing ongoing health, happiness and quality of life for all members of a community.

## Sustainability at Green Shoots

### What We Do Now

**Sustainability is one of Green Shoots' core values and is integral to everything we do, both inside and outside the classroom**



### Nature

With an eye to the principles of *reduce, reuse, recycle*, we instil in our students and staff an awareness of the world's resource limits and how each one of us can play a role in conserving these for future generations:

- We reduce energy consumption by ensuring that lights, fans and air conditioners are switched off when not in use, and are only used when needed. We teach even our youngest learners the importance of remembering to switch off.
- We remind students and staff to save water where possible: in the kitchen, when washing hands before and after eating, and while tending to our gardens and play areas.
- We reuse and recycle biodegradable materials such as paper and food scraps, and encourage students and their families to bring in recyclables for use as art supplies in our kindergarten. Printing is limited and paper used on both sides when possible. Where single-side sheets are used on campus they are recycled for art or office use. Food scraps are fed to our campus chickens or taken home by our staff to feed their livestock.
- We have colour-coded rubbish bins for paper, plastic, and organic waste.

- In the 2015-16 school year, our Student Council launched a programme to reduce the use of non-biodegradable materials such as single-use plastic by banning it on campus and educating our community members to reduce its use off campus.
- Our secondary students tend an organic food garden, from which some of our kitchen supplies are sourced.
- To reduce food waste, we encourage children to take only what they think they can eat at mealtimes (and return for more if they are still hungry).
- Our classes are named after endangered animals endemic to Vietnam, and students conduct activities throughout the school year to learn more about their animal.
- We avoid chemical insecticides, substituting instead the planting of herbs to discourage mosquitoes and using natural methods to destroy ant nests.

## Economy

- Our secondary students learn about issues relating to the sustainable management of our world through CS1 Geography and IGCSE Environmental Management and Global Perspectives courses. In our primary classes, issues relating to sustainability are woven through the curriculum.
- Where possible, we source food and others supplies locally. This has the dual benefit of reducing the environmental damage caused by global shipping and supporting local industry. Where possible, we purchase organic vegetables from local farmers, combining our goals of local sourcing and the protection of nature. Our older students learn how to estimate, and be aware of, their environmental footprint (water, food, and energy).
  - Our fees are held as low as possible and are considerably lower than most international schools in Vietnam, meaning our programme is accessible to a broader base of students.
  - Green Shoots contributes the equivalent of 1% of all staff salaries to a fund that will, once sufficiently resourced, provide scholarships to students whose families struggle to pay their fees. We will continually expand this programme as funds allow.



## Society

- After our students, our employees are our most important stakeholders and we do all that we can to care for them. For our local staff, to whom we believe we owe a long-term commitment, in addition to a competitive salary and benefits package we also offer benefits to family members and have established an Emergency Fund to help those in need. This fund is endowed using a monthly contribution from all Green Shoots staff and offers help following difficulties such as typhoon damage to homes, uninsured medical issues, or lost family income following the death of a spouse.
- We ensure professional support, offering internal and external professional development to all staff members, from school leaders to kitchen staff.
- Green Shoots has raised funds for several local child-centred NGOs and encourages members of our community to do so as well. Financial support for community groups will expand as funds allow.

## Wellbeing

- Staff and students practice mindfulness as part of their regular routine at school.
- Our kitchen provides nutritionally balanced meals, prepared with limited or no artificial colours and preservatives and prepared fresh each day. Students are taught to understand the benefits of a healthy diet and lifestyle and are encouraged to try all food given to them as they broaden their dietary horizons.
- We place substantial emphasis on the wellbeing of the whole child, not simply on academic performance. Our pastoral programme and school counselling service ensure that each child's individual needs are met.
- At Green Shoots, secondary students do not attend 'detention' if disciplinary action is called for (the concept does not apply to younger students). Instead, those who struggle to meet the responsibilities that come with their maturing age are asked to join in a Reflection session during which they consider their actions, the impact of these actions on others, the reasons for their actions, and positive ways to ensure such actions are not repeated. We believe this constructive learning experience helps develop a positive sense of responsibility.
- Staff wellbeing is supported through the benefits package outlined above and through a system of pastoral care for staff and their families that leads many staff members to refer to Green Shoots as their 'second family.'



## Looking Ahead

Our rapid growth to date means Green Shoots is outgrowing its first home and we must begin to build a new one. Our focus is on the development of a permanent campus built using sustainable principles, where the space reflects the learning that will take place within it.

This new campus, which we aim to move into in 2018, will allow us to substantially increase the ways in which sustainability is woven into the everyday experiences of staff, students, and the broader community around us.



**With our school's expansion and the creation of a unique new campus, the Green Shoots community's ability to teach and practice sustainability will increase**

## Sustainable Teaching and Learning

- We hope to become a centre for Sustainability Education, providing training courses for teachers from around the region and building other schools' capacity to create a sustainable teaching and learning environment for their stakeholders.
- In addition, summer and other holiday programmes will be developed as we grow, catering to minority groups (disabled learners, LGBT children, and others) who may not otherwise have the opportunity to interact with other like-minded/like-bodied students.

## Nature

- Our new campus will be built with sustainability at its very core. Buildings will be designed using recycled and/or locally sourced materials (such as plastic bottles and sand, rammed earth, and old tyres), energy consumption will be minimised using natural airflow and light/shading, and the energy we do use will be provided, as much as possible, from green technologies. Learning spaces will be designed with sustainable practices in mind.
- The campus will include an organic garden, through which we will teach both students and members of the wider community how to grow safe and healthy foods. The school's food waste will be composted for use in this garden, where we intend to raise free-range chickens for eggs.



## Economy

- As part of our expansion, Green Shoots intends to open our current international programme to Vietnamese enrolments to the full extent allowed by Vietnamese law. Because the law caps such enrolments at between 0% and 20% (dependent on the student's age), we also aim to launch a new bilingual programme integrating parts of the Vietnamese and British curricula, through which we can offer greater access to a Green Shoots education at a more affordable price to local students.
- With later campus expansions, we hope to launch boarding facilities, making our school an option for students whose families do not live in the region.
- The new campus will grow in an agricultural area between Hoi An and Danang, and we look forward to integrating our new neighbours into our sustainable community. Households living and working around the school may be invited to join us as staff, or as providers of organic garden produce. The school will work with them to build their skills in these areas.
- The scholarship fund mentioned above will grow as our financial resources do, allowing us to enrol students on a Green Shoots programme who would not otherwise be able to access our education.
- We will build links with local businesses, schools, and universities to develop an environmental cluster where innovation in this area can be incubated and encouraged.

## Society

- Green Shoots will build upon its support for child-centred NGOs and service providers to create a full community service.
- In addition, we will encourage staff, parents, and other community members to work with us to fundraise for projects that will benefit the communities within which we live and work.
- We are a non-selective school. We believe in access for all and only deny access if we believe we are not equipped to meet the needs of a child with special learning or other needs. Our focus on access for all will continue as we grow.

## Wellbeing

- Our new campus will include mindfulness and meditation spaces that facilitate an ever-stronger focus on mindful learning and the development of lifelong strategies with which our students can cope with the stresses of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- As funds allow, Green Shoots will employ a fulltime Wellbeing staff member to oversee and coordinate the wellbeing-focused activities at the school.

